

**Institute for Quantitative Social Science
Eric Mindich Conference on Experimental Social Science
co-sponsored by the National Institute on Aging**

**“Action Research in Psychology and Economics”
March 4-5, 2005**

Organized by Harvard Professor of Economics Sendhil Mullainathan, and University of Virginia Professor of Psychology Timothy Wilson, the “Action Research in Psychology and Economics” conference focused on inter-disciplinary work aimed at developing new, innovative approaches to policy questions. Based on the organizers’ belief that a natural alliance exists between social psychologists and behavioral economists, their intent was to have top-notch psychologists and economists collaborate on developing innovative interventions that should eventually be useful for a variety of health applications of interest to BSR/NIA.

The conference brought together psychologists interested in applied work with economists interested in incorporating psychological insights into their work. The goal was to foster inter-disciplinary work on socially relevant problems. The agenda of applied problems included: behavioral economics of poverty, demand for health information, stereotyping and prejudice, neighborhood effects on child outcomes and adoption of technology. The agenda of psychological research included: affective forecasting, implicit discrimination, identity, impact of emotion and decision making under risk.

The format of the conference was built around people, not papers, with the intent to maximize synergies and learning between different research communities; not to simply present finished work. Day one of the conference was open to the public and featured formal presentations to an audience of over one-hundred people. Day two of the conference was closed to the public and involved less formal presentations. The goal of day two was to get as much feedback and conversation between participants as possible. The organizers paired an economist with a psychologist, with one giving an overview of his or her research and the other serving as a “selfish discussant”– describing his/her own research and talking about how he/she can use the other person’s research to enrich it. Both days included exciting pairings and overall, the conference was a tremendous success.